



Congressman Mark DeSaulnier & Congresswoman Barbara Lee Town Hall

with Special Guest, Professor Eric Schickler

JANUARY 27, 2022

Need for Voting Reform

- ▶ In 2021, 19 states enacted a total of **34 new laws that restrict access to the vote** and **more than 440 bills** with provisions **restricting voting access** were introduced in 49 states.
- ▶ Only 19 states and DC have adopted automatic voter registration and only 20 states and DC offer same day voter registration.
- ▶ Research shows that the **racial turnout gap grew** when states enacted strict voter ID laws and voters of color consistently face **longer wait times** on Election Day.
- ▶ The Voting Rights Act ensured state and local governments do not pass laws or policies that deny American citizens the equal right to vote based on race. In 2013, the Supreme Court did away with a key provision of the law in *Shelby County v. Holder*, **resulting in an increase in restrictive voting laws throughout the US.**

Voting Rights Legislation

The House has passed:

- ▶ **For the People Act (H.R. 1)**

- ▶ Package of **anti-corruption** and **pro-democracy reforms**, including improving access to the ballot box; promoting integrity and security in our elections; guaranteeing disclosure of “dark money” contributions; and strengthening oversight of the campaign finance system.

- ▶ **John R. Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act (H.R. 4)**

- ▶ Restores some of the provisions of the original Voting Rights Act that prevent discrimination at the ballot box.

- ▶ **Freedom to Vote: John R. Lewis Act (H.R. 5746)**

- ▶ Improves access to the ballot for all Americans, advances commonsense election integrity reforms, protects our democracy from emerging threats, **restores the Voting Rights Act to its full force**, and protects the rights of Native American voters. The bill combines the Freedom to Vote Act and the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act.

Voting Rights Legislation

Where We Are Now:

- ▶ **In 2021, Senate Republicans blocked action on 3 major voting rights bills** (H.R. 1, H.R. 4, and the Freedom to Vote Act).
- ▶ This month, Senate Republicans blocked the Freedom to Vote: John R. Lewis Act (H.R. 5746).
- ▶ Senate Democrats tried to move ahead with an effort to modify the filibuster, which would allow for the passage of voting rights bills with a simple majority, however, Sens. Manchin (D-WV) and Sinema (D-AZ) joined Republicans in opposition.
- ▶ The filibuster has been modified over 160 times before, and it can be modified again to restore the Senate to a place of robust public debate as well as pass crucial voting rights legislation.

Co-Host

Congresswoman Barbara Lee (CA-13)



- Congresswoman Barbara Lee has served in Congress since 1998. Prior to coming to Congress, Congresswoman Lee served in the California State Assembly and the California State Senate.
- Congresswoman Lee is working to preserve and expand protections for all Americans, empower voters and ensure that our nation's civil rights legacy is protected.

Special Guest

Professor Eric Schickler, UC Berkeley



- Eric Schickler is a Professor of Political Science at UC Berkeley. He is the author of several prize-winning books and has written about voting rights and the filibuster.
- His research and teaching interests are in the areas of American politics, the U.S. Congress, rational choice theory, American political development, and public opinion.